

to serve as chair pro tempore for the meeting and identify the appropriate cell biologists. In developing his list of cell biologists, Porter emphasized the need to bring in physiologists and biochemists to ensure balance (letter of Porter to Harris, 21 October 1959).

One problem this initiative faced was that other existing societies had come to recognize the cell as a prime area of focus and began jockeying for control of the new field of cell biology. An example is the Society of General Physiologists (SGP), itself created as recently as 1946.²⁰ Kenneth Thiman had recently prepared a report recommending that the SGP expand to include cell biologists and geneticists. C. L. Prosser, who was asked to represent the SGP, wrote to Porter (22 December 1959):

As you well know, the Society of General Physiologists is moving rather rapidly in the direction of becoming a society for cell biology. We feel our symposia have satisfied a real need in this area, and with the organization of a new division of comparative physiology within the American Society of Zoologists, it appears to us that the real place for the cellular approach to biological function is in the Society of General Physiologists. There is a good indication that the Society will have a journal affiliation shortly.²¹

Thus, a key question for those interested in establishing a society for cell biology was how to position it with respect to existing societies.

Porter's committee met at the Rockefeller Institute on 9 January 1960. The meeting began with remarks from representatives of the different constituencies: Morgan Harris of the TCA; E. G. Butler as chair of the Cell Biology Study Section; Paul Weiss, representing the International Society for Cell Biology; William McElroy and Teru Hayashi, representing the Society of General Physiologists; and Montrose Moses, Teru Hayashi, and A. K. Solomon, as organizers of recent Gordon Conferences on cell structure and metabolism. McElroy and Hayashi reported that by then the Society of General Physiologists had rejected the proposal to become a society for cell biology and supported forming a new society for cell biology. Thirteen of the fifteen scientists present then voted to create a new society to be named the

²⁰ According to Morgan Harris, he approached Dan Mazia when Mazia was President of the Society of General Physiologists and proposed to merge the TCA and the Society of General Physiologists into a Society for Cell Biology but was rebuffed. Interview with Morgan Harris, 9 December 1995, Berkeley, California.

²¹ Indeed, in September 1960 the *Journal of General Physiology*, which had been published by the Rockefeller Institute since 1918, became the official organ of the Society of General Physiologists.